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## **County Employment and Wages in Massachusetts – Second Quarter 2017**

Employment increased in 8 of the 9 large counties in Massachusetts from June 2016 to June 2017. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2016 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that four counties had over-the-year employment gains that were larger than the 1.7-percent national average: Suffolk (2.3 percent), Middlesex (2.1 percent), Barnstable (2.0 percent), and Plymouth (1.9 percent). Employment in Essex County was unchanged over the year.

Nationally, 318 of the 346 large counties had employment gains from June 2016 to June 2017. The largest over-the-year percentage gain was recorded in Midland, Texas (7.3 percent). Lucas, Ohio, had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment (-1.9 percent).

Among the nine large counties in Massachusetts, employment was highest in Middlesex (912,000) in June 2017, followed by Suffolk (677,300). Together, Massachusetts' large counties accounted for 93.6 percent of total employment within the commonwealth. Nationwide, the 346 largest counties made up 72.7 percent of total U.S. employment in June 2017.

Average weekly wages increased in all of the large counties in Massachusetts from the second quarter of 2016 to the second quarter of 2017. Plymouth County had the largest wage gain, up 4.8 percent. Suffolk (4.4 percent) and Barnstable (4.2 percent) recorded the next highest wage growth. Suffolk County had the highest average weekly wage at \$1,651, followed by Middlesex County at \$1,522. Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 3.2 percent over the year to \$1,020 in the second quarter of 2017. (See [table 1.](#))

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the five counties in Massachusetts with employment below 75,000. All five of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See [table 2.](#))

### **Large County Wage Changes**

Six of the nine large counties in Massachusetts recorded wage growth above the national increase of 3.2 percent. Plymouth County's 4.8-percent annual wage gain ranked 48<sup>th</sup> among the 346 largest U.S. counties in the second quarter of June 2017. Suffolk (4.4 percent) also placed in the top-fifth for wage growth among the largest U.S. counties. (See [table 1.](#)) Conversely, Bristol County's wage gain of 1.3 percent over the year ranked in the bottom-fifth among the large U.S. counties.

Of the 346 largest U.S. counties, 325 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Nationwide, New Hanover, N.C., ranked first in average weekly wage growth, with an increase of 11.9 percent from the second quarter of 2016. Nineteen large U.S. counties had wage declines over the year. McLean, Ill., had the largest percentage decline in average weekly wages with a loss of 20.4 percent.

### **Large County Average Weekly Wages**

Average weekly wages in four of Massachusetts' nine large counties were above the national average of \$1,020 in the second quarter of 2017 and all ranked in the top-fifth nationwide. Two of these counties placed in the top 10 nationwide: Suffolk (\$1,651, 6<sup>th</sup>) and Middlesex (\$1,522, 10<sup>th</sup>). Barnstable County (\$869, 237<sup>th</sup>) had the lowest average weekly wage among the large counties in the commonwealth.

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 97 of the 346 largest U.S. counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,392. San Mateo, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$2,093, followed by San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,941), New York, N.Y. (\$1,907), and Washington, D.C. (\$1,675).

More than two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (249) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the second quarter of 2017. The lowest weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas (\$615), followed by Horry S.C. (\$622) and the Texas counties of Hidalgo (\$632) and Webb (\$667). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than one-third of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif. (\$2,392).

### **Average Weekly Wages in Massachusetts' Smaller Counties**

All five counties in Massachusetts with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$1,020. Among these smaller counties, Nantucket had the highest average weekly wage at \$1,000 and Franklin reported the lowest at \$787.

When all 14 counties in Massachusetts were considered, 3 counties had average weekly wages below \$899. Four counties reported weekly wages ranging from \$900 to \$999, four had wages from \$1,000 to \$1,099, and three had wages above \$1,100. The two highest-paid counties were located in the Boston metropolitan area, which includes the area encircled by Highway 128. (See [chart 1.](#))

### **Additional Statistics and other Information**

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in table 3. For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit the QCEW Web site at [www.bls.gov/cew](http://www.bls.gov/cew).

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2016 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2017 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2016 are now available online at [www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn16.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn16.htm). The 2017 edition of Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online will be available in September 2018.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Services: 1-800-877-8339.

## Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.9 million employer reports cover 145.2 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/); however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

**Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 9 largest counties in Massachusetts, second quarter 2017**

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Area	Employment			Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	June 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2016-17 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level <sup>(3)</sup>	Percent change, second quarter 2016-17 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>
United States <sup>(4)</sup> ...	145,186.4	1.7	--	\$1,020	--	3.2	--
Massachusetts .	3,604.5	1.6	--	1,278	2	3.6	11
Barnstable, Mass. ....	108.6	2.0	125	869	237	4.2	75
Bristol, Mass. ....	230.5	1.3	200	950	158	1.3	282
Essex, Mass. .	330.4	0.0	319	1,093	64	3.7	114
Hampden, Mass. ....	209.8	0.6	274	900	201	1.7	253
Middlesex, Mass. ....	912.0	2.1	117	1,522	10	3.3	140
Norfolk, Mass. ....	357.7	0.8	252	1,182	40	3.7	114
Plymouth, Mass. ....	198.2	1.9	134	1,000	117	4.8	48
Suffolk, Mass. ....	677.3	2.3	99	1,651	6	4.4	66
Worcester, Mass. ....	350.0	1.1	222	1,012	104	2.0	236

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

**Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all the counties in Massachusetts, second quarter 2017**

Area	Employment June 2017	Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>
United States <sup>(2)</sup> .....	145,186.4	\$1,020
Massachusetts .....	3,604.5	1,278
Barnstable .....	108.6	869
Berkshire .....	64.0	859
Bristol .....	230.5	950
Dukes .....	11.3	923
Essex.....	330.4	1,093
Franklin.....	27.5	787
Hampden.....	209.8	900
Hampshire.....	67.1	914
Middlesex .....	912.0	1,522
Nantucket .....	9.3	1,000
Norfolk.....	357.7	1,182
Plymouth .....	198.2	1,000
Suffolk.....	677.3	1,651
Worcester .....	350.0	1,012

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Covered employment and wages include workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

**Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, second quarter 2017**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	June 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2016-17	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2016-17	National ranking by percent change
United States <sup>(2)</sup> .....	145,186.4	1.7	\$1,020	--	3.2	--
Alabama .....	1,946.4	1.2	858	38	2.8	31
Alaska .....	338.4	-0.7	1,005	16	-0.5	51
Arizona .....	2,699.6	2.9	943	23	2.5	35
Arkansas .....	1,206.0	0.7	810	47	3.2	22
California .....	17,150.9	2.2	1,210	5	4.7	3
Colorado .....	2,638.8	2.5	1,042	11	4.2	5
Connecticut .....	1,701.2	0.6	1,216	4	0.4	50
Delaware .....	446.6	0.6	1,012	15	2.2	43
District of Columbia .....	766.5	1.0	1,675	1	3.3	19
Florida .....	8,390.6	2.8	905	27	2.5	35
Georgia.....	4,357.8	2.1	956	21	2.9	27
Hawaii.....	653.0	1.0	935	24	3.5	13
Idaho .....	723.5	3.4	765	50	3.4	16
Illinois .....	6,006.6	0.9	1,062	9	2.4	39
Indiana.....	3,041.0	1.5	859	37	3.7	9
Iowa.....	1,571.4	0.4	853	39	3.3	19
Kansas .....	1,377.8	-0.1	849	40	2.4	39
Kentucky.....	1,889.4	0.8	862	35	2.9	27
Louisiana .....	1,907.7	0.0	869	34	2.0	46
Maine.....	629.1	0.9	814	46	2.5	35
Maryland.....	2,694.8	1.4	1,103	8	3.1	23
Massachusetts .....	3,604.5	1.6	1,278	2	3.6	11
Michigan .....	4,365.3	1.6	969	19	2.9	27
Minnesota.....	2,902.1	2.0	1,037	12	3.9	6
Mississippi .....	1,128.9	0.7	732	51	0.8	49
Missouri .....	2,818.7	1.2	889	30	3.0	25
Montana .....	473.6	1.3	797	48	3.9	6
Nebraska .....	984.0	0.4	833	43	3.5	13
Nevada .....	1,333.5	3.4	900	29	2.9	27
New Hampshire.....	665.4	1.6	1,015	14	1.2	48
New Jersey.....	4,123.5	1.8	1,173	6	2.3	41
New Mexico .....	815.4	0.7	823	45	1.5	47
New York .....	9,417.4	1.6	1,237	3	2.2	43
North Carolina .....	4,361.4	1.8	902	28	4.3	4
North Dakota .....	422.7	-0.2	953	22	5.0	2
Ohio.....	5,422.8	1.2	912	25	3.3	19
Oklahoma .....	1,583.8	0.8	845	41	2.5	35
Oregon .....	1,912.6	2.2	967	20	3.8	8
Pennsylvania .....	5,859.4	1.3	1,000	17	3.0	25
Rhode Island .....	487.3	1.0	980	18	2.6	33
South Carolina.....	2,053.9	2.0	834	42	3.6	11
South Dakota.....	435.5	0.6	785	49	3.4	16
Tennessee .....	2,948.1	1.8	906	26	3.5	13
Texas .....	12,059.6	2.1	1,027	13	2.7	32
Utah.....	1,440.3	3.4	862	35	2.6	33
Vermont.....	314.2	1.0	870	33	2.1	45
Virginia.....	3,886.6	1.5	1,047	10	3.7	9
Washington.....	3,352.5	2.2	1,141	7	5.6	1
West Virginia .....	690.9	-0.3	828	44	3.4	16
Wisconsin .....	2,905.3	1.1	876	31	2.3	41
Wyoming .....	280.2	-0.7	875	32	3.1	23
Puerto Rico.....	873.6	-1.0	515	(3)	1.2	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, second quarter 2017 - Continued**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	June 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2016-17	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2016-17	National ranking by percent change
Virgin Islands .....	38.6	0.4	762	(3)	2.6	(3)

## Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

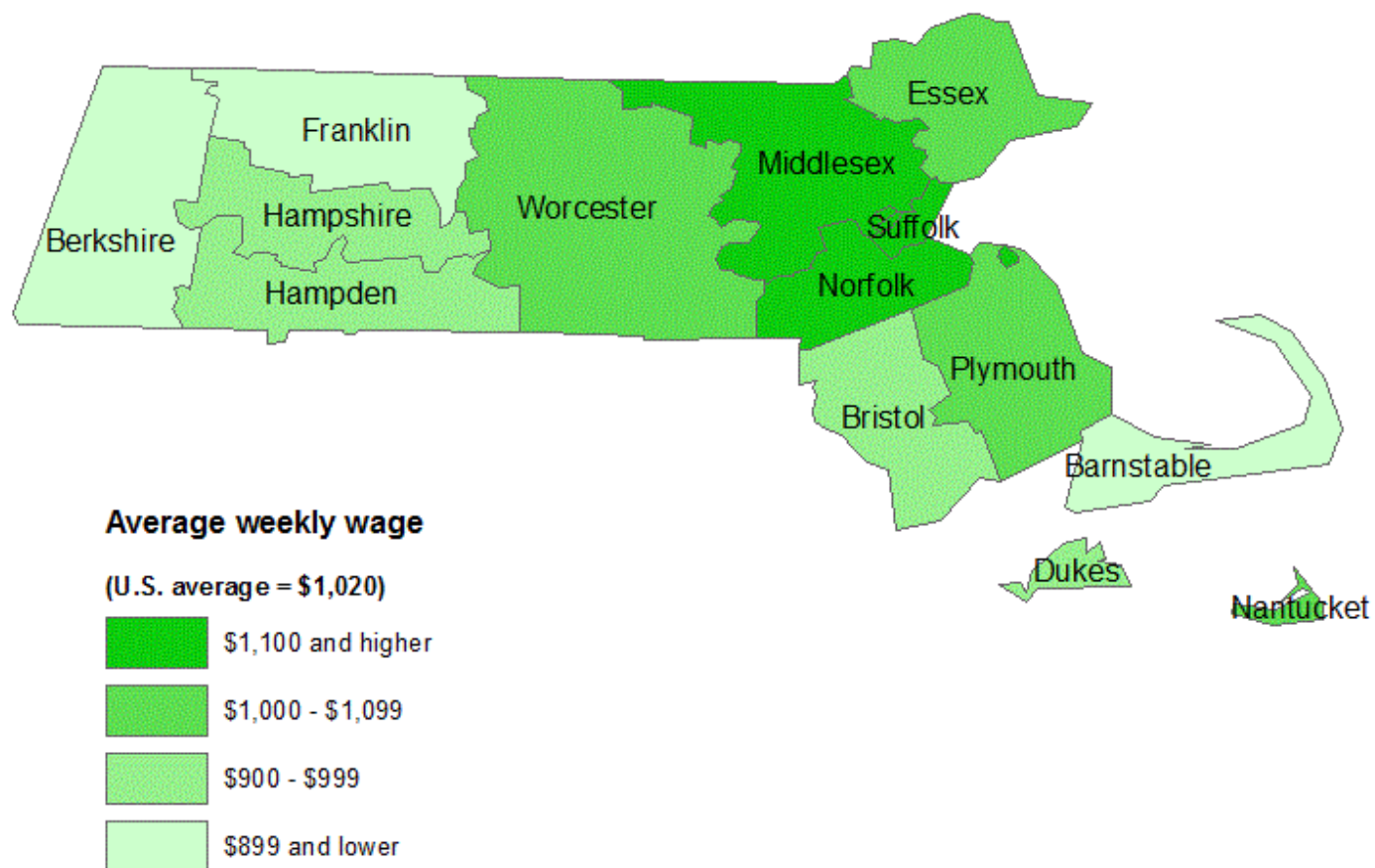
(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.



Chart 1. Average weekly wages  
by county in Massachusetts,  
second quarter 2017



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.